



Department of Justice

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Eastern District of California**

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SACRAMENTO, Calif.—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a federal grand jury returned a superseding indictment against LAVON CARTER, JR., 20, of Vallejo, and his mother LAVERNE VAUGHN, 36, also of Vallejo, charging them with various crimes involving the sex trafficking of a minor. Previously, a federal grand jury had returned an indictment charging CARTER with one count of sex trafficking of children, and three counts of interstate transportation of a minor with the intent that the minor engage in prostitution. The superseding indictment returned today, adds VAUGHN as a co-defendant in the count charging CARTER with the sex trafficking of children.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with assistance from the Vallejo Police Department.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Kenneth J. Melikian, who is prosecuting this case, CARTER recruited a fourteen-year-old girl to work as a prostitute. The girl initially stated that she was seventeen. But when she turned fifteen, CARTER was informed of the girl's true age. CARTER nevertheless continued to sell her sexual services to paying customers. He enlisted the assistance of Craigslist.org on the internet to advertise the young girl's availability as a prostitute.

VAUGHN, who is CARTER's mother, is charged with aiding and abetting CARTER's criminal activities. Court documents allege that, on occasions that CARTER could not drive his young prostitute to the streets she was supposed to walk, VAUGHN would drive the girl there

for him. Court documents further allege that VAUGHN allowed CARTER to use her computer to post the advertisements on *Craigslist.org* which advertised the young girl's availability as a prostitute.

If convicted as charged, both CARTER and VAUGHN face a minimum sentence of ten years in prison, and a fine of up to \$250,000. The maximum sentence which they are both facing is life imprisonment. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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